

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

DATE: March 30, 2009

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS TAYLOR
BELDEN
CHAMPAGNE
MERLINO
STEC
SOKOL
PITKIN

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

PATRICIA TATICH, DIRECTOR

WAYNE LAMOTHE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

JAMIE WHITE, SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

REPRESENTING WARREN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION:

JOHN WHEATLEY, PROJECT MANAGER, QUEENSBURY
INDUSTRIAL PARK

ELAINE BEHLMER, OFFICE MANAGER

JENNIFER SWITZER, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE/EMPIRE ZONE
SPECIALIST

JEFF FARLEY, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

FREDERICK MONROE, CHAIRMAN

TRISH NENNINGER, SECOND ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY

HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND FISCAL
SERVICES

JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD

KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER

SUPERVISOR STRAINER

SUPERVISOR TESSIER

SUPERVISOR THOMAS

MIKE BORGOS, PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BRUCE CARR, STAFFORD, CARR & McNALLY, P.C.

CHARLENE DiRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Taylor called the meeting of the Planning & Community Development Committee to order at 10:20 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Patricia Tatich, Director of the Planning & Community Development Department, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Tatich began the agenda review with pending item number one which pertained to collaborating efforts with the Adirondack Community Housing Trust (ACHT). She noted that she had continued communication with Alan Hipps, Executive Director of Housing Opportunities for Essex County, which was the administering entity for the ACHT. She added that there was no new information to report at this time and she would like to leave this as a pending item for future meetings.

Ms. Tatich stated that pending item number two pertained to two vacancies on the Warren County Planning Board, one from the Town of Bolton and one from the Town of Queensbury. She added that this item would also need to remain on the pending item list.

Ms. Tatich requested to skip to agenda item number three, which also pertained to the Warren County Planning Board. She said that there was an opportunity to review the amount of staff hours that were spent on completing work for the Warren County Planning Board. She added that they continued to monitor the amount of time it took to review projects and make recommendations. She stated that she and Wayne LaMothe, Assistant Director of the Planning & Community Development Department, had discussed the possibility of eliminating variances and focusing on the larger projects. Mr. Taylor questioned if the issue was to eliminate the need for some projects to be presented to the County and Ms. Tatich replied affirmatively.

Referring to the last page of the agenda packet, Mr. LaMothe stated that it detailed the percentage of projects which were referred to the Warren County Planning Board from 2005 through 2008 and he added that the page also contained a list of items that they felt were of local concern. He advised that each town had different zoning regulations and used the example that one town might require a setback of 50 feet while another town might require a setback of 100 feet. He said that they wanted to expand the existing Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with the individual towns to state that projects would not be reviewed by the Warren County Planning Board unless the project was of such a scope that the local planning board wanted to have the project reviewed by the Warren County Planning Board. He explained that the Warren County Planning Board reviewed approximately 434 projects per year and this would reduce the number of projects by approximately half.

Following a brief discussion, motion was made by Mr. Champagne, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to amend the existing or authorize new MOU's between the Warren County Planning Board and the municipalities with regard to proposed action subject to referral to the Warren County Planning Board. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the April 17, 2009 Board meeting.*

Ms. Tatich stated that pending item number three pertained to the proposed Geographic Information System (GIS) Pricing Schedule which was included in the agenda packet. Mr. LaMothe advised that after further review it was determined that the pricing schedule was consistent with that of similar services in other County Departments. It was the consensus of the Committee that the GIS Pricing Schedule presented by the Planning & Community Development Department be approved.

Mr. Stec entered the meeting at 10:35 a.m.

Ms. Tatich said that agenda item number one was to update the Committee on grant applications that were currently being prepared by the Planning & Community Development Department. Mr. LaMothe stated that there were three grant applications that were currently pending: a \$400,000 application through the HOME Program; a \$200,000 application through the Access to Home Program; and a \$75,000 application through the RESTORE Program. He added that all were housing programs and they anticipated being apprised of the amount of the grant awards by June. He advised the Committee that they were currently working on an application for a public facilities grant for \$741,000 for improvements to the Hudson

Headwaters Health Network facility. He said that they were considering the submission of a Restore New York grant application for the Balsam House, in the Town of Chester for approximately \$1 million.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Tatich reported that agenda item number two pertained to the County's proposed involvement in advancing the needs analysis for broadband in a joint effort with Hamilton and Washington Counties. She said that she had spoken with Bill Farber from Hamilton County and Bob Banks from Washington County about the possibility of collaborating in a broadband study. She added that initially the discussion had pertained to joining efforts to qualify for economic stimulus funding, but they had since learned that the economic stimulus funding was for broadband projects which had been engineered and were ready to begin. She advised that Hamilton and Washington Counties were interested in pooling funds to enlist the services of CBN Connect to prepare a needs analysis relative to the broadband project. She said that she had included basic information on broadband in the agenda packet. She noted that it would be less expensive for the County to complete the broadband study if they joined resources with one or more counties. She advised that there was approximately \$45,000 in funds available for the purpose of a broadband study.

Mr. Tessier entered the meeting at 10:50 a.m.

Ms. Tatich apprised the Committee that if Warren County joined with Hamilton and Washington Counties for the purpose of a needs analysis of broadband, the investment would be minimal as compared to the rewards. Chairman Monroe stated that he and Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services, had gone to Governor Paterson's Office for a presentation on economic stimulus funding. He said that in viewing the map of broadband coverage in New York State it was interesting to see that one fifth of the State was lacking broadband coverage, most of which was the Adirondack Park. He explained that the Paterson administration considered broadband coverage to be a priority for the region. He further stated that the inclusion of broadband to the area made it a more attractive location for prospective companies to base their headquarters. He apprised that there would be three funding rounds for economic stimulus funding for broadband: one which was ongoing; one in September of 2009; and one in March of 2010. He advised that Howard Lowe, of CBN Connect, had said that if Warren County started now they could become eligible for funding under the March 2010 distribution. He stated that Senator Little felt that broadband was the most important economic stimulus project that could be completed in the region.

Chairman Monroe explained that the concept of a Request for Proposal (RFP) had been discussed in the past. He stated that CBN Connect had offered to complete the study for \$60,000 for one county; \$50,000 each for two counties; and \$40,000 each for three counties. He said that his concern with the RFP process would be the possibility of three separate companies working in three separate directions and not working towards a mutual goal. He advised that he had requested that the County Attorney's Office research the legality of entering into an agreement with CBN Connect, who was a soul source in the sense that they were the only provider willing to work jointly with the three counties.

Ms. Tatich stated that there was \$2.5 million in economic stimulus funding available for

broadband for rural areas of New York State. She noted that joining forces with Hamilton and Washington Counties would be cost effective. Mr. LaMothe apprised the Committee that it was preferable that CBN Connect complete the needs analysis as they had completed the broadband for all of the areas that Warren County would connect with. Chairman Monroe explained that CBN Connect had worked with the Development Authority of the North Country, Jefferson County, Lewis County and St. Lawrence County, thereby creating a complete loop around the Adirondacks.

Discussion ensued.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Champagne and carried unanimously to authorize an MOU between Warren, Washington and Hamilton Counties for preparation of a needs analysis relative to the implementation of the broadband project to be prepared by CBN Connect, as sole source provider subject to approval of the County Attorney. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the April 17, 2009 Board meeting.*

Ms. Tatich requested authorization for an inter-departmental agreement between the Information Technology (IT) Department and the Planning & Community Development Department for development of a website for the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor, with funds to be paid from the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor Grant funding. Mr. LaMothe advised that in order to reimburse IT for their service, an agreement was needed as the bill was being paid with grant monies. Mr. Belden asked how much was owed and Mr. LaMothe replied that it was approximately \$2,700.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to authorize an agreement between the IT Department and the Planning & Community Development Department, as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the April 17, 2009 Board meeting.*

Ms. Tatich said that the last item for discussion pertained to the Quadricentennial Grant. Trish Nenninger, Second Assistant County Attorney, stated that the Quadricentennial Grant was for \$45,000 and there had been a previous amendment which stated that no matching funds were required. She added that the grant contract had been written so that municipalities were contributing towards certain aspects of the Quadricentennial Celebration. She said that since some matching funds had been included in the contract a further amendment was necessary. Mr. Champagne asked how much the local share was and Mrs. Nenninger replied that it was \$22,500.

Ms. Tatich explained that Warren County had acted as the facilitator for the grant funding. She added that the purpose was to act as a mediator to facilitate the transfer of funding from the State to the County and out to the municipalities. Chairman Monroe asked if this involved the map project and Ms. Tatich replied affirmatively. Chairman Monroe stated that the project was receiving a lot of support as the existing quadricentennial map only extended as far as Cohoes, New York and the proposed map would include attractions and other features. Ms. Tatich said

that the project would include videos, maps and informational kiosks. Mr. Taylor questioned if there was any cost to the County and Ms. Tatich replied in the negative.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to amend Resolution No. 89 of 2009, which amended Resolution No. 695 of 2008, to delete the matching funds requirement of the participating municipalities with regards to the Quadricentennial Grant, to state that there were matching funds required for the grant, which would be provided by the participating town, to authorize the Chairman of the Board to execute documents relating to the grant application and to further authorize the preparation of MOU's between the County and the various participating towns with regards to the local match. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the April 17, 2009 Board meeting.*

Chairman Monroe reported that the Adirondack Park Agency had submitted three bills to the State Legislature through Senator Kruger from Brooklyn, one of which was an affordable housing bill which would award density bonuses of four units for one principal building, if certain criteria was met. He said that he would encourage the Planning & Community Development Committee and the Legislative & Rules Committee to support the proposed legislation with an amendment that the requirement for the building to be within four miles of the hamlet be deleted for those towns that did not have hamlets.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Champagne and carried unanimously to refer the issue of the proposed legislation to the Legislative & Rules Committee for consideration.

Commencing with the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) portion of the meeting, John Wheatley, Project Manager, Queensbury Industrial Park, said that the EDC only had a few items on the agenda. He stated that Jennifer Switzer, Director of Finance/Empire Zone Specialist, would begin with an update on the Empire Zone.

Ms. Switzer apprised that Len Fosbrook, Executive Director of the EDC, had attended a meeting at the invitation of Senator Little regarding the Empire Zone. She said the purpose of the meeting had been to garner support for the program. She advised that she had not yet seen any written documents as a result of the meeting.

Elaine Behlmer, Office Manager for the EDC, said that the EDC would hold their 10th Annual Luncheon on May 1, 2009 and the official invitations would be mailed soon. She stated that the cost of the luncheon would be \$45 for members and \$65 for non-members. She advised that the EDC had two levels of sponsorship for the luncheon; \$2,500 for a platinum sponsorship; \$1,000 for a gold sponsorship; and \$500 for a Silver sponsorship. Mr. Champagne noted that he had attended the EDC Annual Luncheon last year and said that it had been worth the price of admittance. Jeff Farley, Director of Programs and Services for the EDC, said that the EDC had a longtime partnership with the CBG (Center for Business and Government). He stated that Bioconnex was a medical device manufacturer.

Mr. Wheatley advised that as part of the EDC's economic development strategic plan there had

been a series of discussions pertaining to tourism. He said that one of the ideas that had been presented was to commission a study to determine a comprehensive approach to tourism. Mr. Farley apprised the Committee that one of the concerns of the members of the EDC was that they wanted to know what efforts were being made towards the promotion of tourism. Mr. Wheatley stated that the EDC wanted to commission a County-wide independent study of the success of tourism marketing and collaborative efforts.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden and seconded by Mr. Merlino to support the EDC in their commission of a County-wide independent study of the success of tourism marketing and collaborative efforts.

Mr. Pitkin asked if there was similar data available from other studies or panels. Mr. Farley responded that the EDC had performed similar studies in the past. Mr. Wheatley stated that the study would be a benchmark for further information. Mr. Payne said that the Warren County Tourism Department had given a presentation to twenty Lake George hotel owners last week. He added that the hotel owners were very impressed with the Tourism Department's efforts to promote tourism in Warren County.

Brief discussion ensued.

Motion was made by Mr. Champagne, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously to table the issue of supporting the EDC in their efforts to commission a County-wide independent study of the success of tourism marketing and collaborative efforts until the next Committee meeting.

There being no further business to come before the Planning & Community Development Committee, on motion by Mr. Champagne and seconded by Mr. Sokol, Mr. Taylor adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist